

County of Abbeville Sheriff's Office

Ray Watson
SHERIFF



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Policy/Procedure:

The investigation of crime and the prosecution of offenders requires that information be obtained through the application of scientific knowledge and methods. In order to effectively use laboratory support services, physical evidence must be identified, preserved properly and transmitted to the laboratory. The Abbeville County Sheriff's Office will diligently follow forensic methods of obtaining and protecting this evidence, in order to carry out the functions of the department.

Procedures:

Availability of Qualified Personnel for Evidence Processing: Response to calls for service where a crime has been committed that may involve physical evidence requires that such evidence to be collected promptly and submitted to the laboratory without a delay.

The Investigations Division maintains one investigator on a 24-hour on-call basis to respond to major crime scenes. The on-duty patrol supervisor will contact the on-call investigator to process a major crime scene. Additionally, the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) has forensic technicians available to respond for major crime scene processing which is beyond the capability of this department.

Sexual Assault/Abuse Kits: The Sexual Assault/Abuse kit will be used during the investigation of sexual assaults and sexual abuse cases. The victim will be transported to Abbeville Area Hospital or they can go on their own. A physician will conduct the sexual assault/abuse protocol of the victim using the kit to obtain necessary evidence and samples.

The investigating deputy or investigator will take custody of the kit and place it in the temporary storage refrigerator. The deputy will complete the ACSO evidence submittal report and the SLED Analysis Report.

Submission of Evidence to the Property Room & Crime Lab: All evidence is to be submitted to the property room as soon as practical to preserve the chain of custody. Evidence will be secured in the property room until it is transferred to the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) Forensics Laboratory. If at all possible, perishable evidence will be transferred to SLED by the property custodian on a weekly basis.

Transfer to Crime Lab: The Crime Scene Technician/Evidence/Property Custodian is responsible for conveying evidence from the property room to the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) Crime Lab. However, the alternate property custodian or other deputy may convey evidence, as long as the chain of custody is maintained. If at all possible, transfers to the lab will be made on a weekly basis. The responsibility for requesting laboratory examinations rests with the investigating deputy.

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Requesting Written Results of Laboratory Analysis: The South Carolina Law Enforcement (SLED) Forensics Lab provides a written report of laboratory findings as standard procedure on all requests for laboratory examination. Written reports of laboratory findings received from the SLED Lab are filed with the case file in the office of the Court Liaison and/or with the investigating deputy's case file. A copy of the report will be provided to any requesting deputy and/or the Solicitor's office upon request.

In 2018 the Abbeville had 3 Sexual assault kits collected and submitted to SLED. Any other information would have to be confirmed through the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division.

Respectfully I am
Natalie L. Talbert
Chief Deputy
ACSO